

**NEW DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
APPROVAL VISIT**

PRIMLIMINARY REPORT

**SAU # 71
GOSHEN/LEMPSTER**

**Evaluation Conducted on:
April 26, 1999**

**Dr. Howard Goodrow,
Superintendent/Special Education Director**

VISITING TEAM MEMBERS:

Debra Grabill, State Consultant, NHDOE
Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu, Education Consultant, SERESC
Maryclare Heffernan, Education Consultant, SERESC
Harvey Harkness, Education Consultant, SERESC

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval evaluation was conducted at SAU #71 on April 26, 1999. The visiting team convened in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students ages 3-21 within the Goshen/Lempster School District. Prior to the visit to SAU #71, the New Hampshire Department of Education requested the submission of application materials which would have included program descriptions, special education policies and procedures, a personnel roster, SPEDIS information, a list of parents to be interviewed, as well as curriculum information, professional development opportunities available in the SAU, an overview of related services, out of district placements and procedures related to students who fall under the James O' Consent decree. Despite two requests for such information, none of the above listed materials was submitted, which made it impossible for the team to conduct a comprehensive review of special education programming within SAU # 71. In addition, it is important to note that the superintendent/special education director was not onsite while the team attempted to complete required activities; although the team enjoyed the full cooperation of the staff at Goshen/Lempster Elementary School. The individuals within the school quickly made preparations with regard to the team's workplace, a tour of the facility and arranging interviews with staff as requested. This hospitality and assistance was most helpful to the team in attempting to accomplish its responsibilities, and is greatly appreciated.

The report that follows represents the consensus of all the visiting team members. The reader should remember this is a preliminary report and one that includes only a partial list of identified citations to the New Hampshire Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities. Not all aspects of the special education programming could be reviewed due to lack of required documentation being submitted. Based on this one-day visit to Goshen/Lempster, the team determined that a sufficient sampling of information was reviewed to yield this report. In order to accomplish the many aspects of this NHDOE Special Education Program Approval visit, the team conducted the following activities:

1. Review of 2 student records, one from the elementary and one from the high school level.
2. A tour of the Goshen/Lempster Elementary School
3. Interviews with the following staff: the administrative assistant, a special education teacher, the school principal, as well as informal conversations with educational personnel as time and availability permitted.
4. Informal classroom observations of both regular and special education programming.

SECTION II. COMMENDATIONS:

The visiting team wishes to identify the following factors as worthy of special recognition. We commend:

- The staff at the Goshen/Lempster Elementary School for their commitment to children despite limited resources and minimal leadership in the area of special education.
- Student files on the elementary level appear to be generally complete and well organized.
- There is a sense of teamwork and feeling of community within the Goshen/Lempster Elementary School.
- Staff appears open to professional development opportunities and willing to strengthen their skills as educators.

SECTION III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE

As the visiting team carried out their activities, several significant areas of concern were identified as requiring immediate attention. It was evident to the team that this SAU is lacking in policy, procedure, direction and implementation of state and federal special education regulations. To their credit, the special educators at the Goshen Lempster Elementary School are attempting to develop policy, procedures and forms to ensure that requirements of the law are met. The visiting team found no evidence of special education procedural handbooks, program descriptions or guidelines for program development and that there has been no training in special education regulations, updates in regards to amendments to IDEA, or best practices as they relate to all children. As a newly formed SAU, perhaps the most significant transition for special educators in Goshen/Lempster comes from the minimal leadership and the loss of the position of a special education director. This has created uncertainty and a lack of direction for special education services in Goshen/Lempster. At this juncture, the SAU needs to upgrade leadership in order to speed progress and clarify direction for special education services, and bring a clear vision of how SAU#71 can appropriately meet the needs of its students with disabilities ages 3-21.

In light of these issues, many of the exceptions to the New Hampshire Standards for Students with Disabilities are included in the report that follows. The listing of these items is not intended to imply that SAU #71 was found totally lacking in all aspects of special education regulations, rather it has been developed as a preliminary listing of standards that need to be addressed and integrated into the special education services for disabled students ages 3-21 in the Goshen/Lempster School District.

SECTION IV. CITATIONS OF EXCEPTION TO THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STANDARDS FOR THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Citations from the April 26, 1999 visit were numerous and have been grouped under various headings of the New Hampshire State Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities to aid in the comprehension and usefulness of this report. The reader should remember that this is a preliminary listing and maybe modified upon completion and submittal of all required Special Education Program Approval Application Materials. The citations below are a partial list of findings and are not considered to be all-inclusive.

STANDARDS REFERENCE:

1103, CHILDFIND

Evidence must be provided that the LEA has Childfind procedures for persons ages 3-21 and is following those procedures.

1105, REPORTING

Evidence must be provided that indicates SPEDIS reporting is done consistently and that childfind data is reported to the DOE as required by law.

1107, EVALUATION

Evidence must be provided that the materials, methods, policies and procedures used for evaluation of student's meets the minimum protection afforded to them.

1109, INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS

Evidence must be provided that IEPs have all required components and that the process for development of such documents adheres to state and federal regulations.

1109, EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR PROGRAMMING

Evidence must be provided that indicates eligible students receive ESY programming as appropriate and within the period outlined in state and federal regulations.

1113, VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Evidence must be provided that demonstrates vocational assessments are considered for students, that evaluations are conducted, and vocational IEP components are included when the student is provided with vocational programming.

1113, PLACEMENT

Evidence must be provided that the LEA is ensuring that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students who do not have disabilities.

1117, PARTICIPATION OF PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO ARE PLACED IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS BY PARENTS WITHOUT THE COOPERATION OF THE LEA.

Evidence must be provided that there are policies outlining how the LEA provides special education and related services as explained in Ed. 1117.01-15 and that the LEA assumes administrative direction and control.

1119, OPERATION OF PROGRAMS

Evidence must be submitted that the LEA has policies and procedures to adhere to requirements outlined in 1119. This includes, but is not limited to curricula, facilities, class size and age range, equipment and materials, programming in the regular education setting and ensuring that all students with educational disabilities have an equal opportunity to complete a course of studies leading to a high school diploma.

1123, CONFIDENTIALITY

There needs to be evidence of written policy which describes informing parents of their rights, inspecting records, access to records, disclosing records etc.

1125, PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

Evidence needs to be submitted outlining the policies and procedures that guarantees written procedures are in place as outlined in ED. 1125.

1129, SURROGATE PARENTS

The LEA must provide evidence that there are policies and procedures that the school district follows in the appointment of a Surrogate Parent.

1136, PROVISION OF SERVICES FOR YOUTH COMMITTED TO YOUTH DETENTION CENTERS

The LEA must submit policies and procedures that follow the provisions outlined in Ed. 1136. (Provision of services for court ordered placements at Youth Detention Centers).

SECTION V. CONCLUSIONS:

In order to meet the above outlined requirements, a copy of the required Special Education Program Approval Application materials are once again being forwarded with this report. Included with this documentation are the personnel roster, the program description form, a parent interview form, as well as a set of instructions for completion of the application. If you have any questions regarding this report, or the application materials, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu at SERESC.

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUESTS THAT THE APPLICATION MATERIALS BE COMPLETED AND FORWARDED TO SERESC NO LATER THAN JUNE 1, 1999. UPON RECEIPT OF THE REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION, A FOLLOW UP VISIT WILL BE SCHEDULE TO SAU# 71 FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION APPROVAL.

ADDENDUM, SAU 71 PROGRAM APPROVAL REPORT
NH Special Education Program Approval Process
Review of Student Record

(This form is to be completed for each school with the assistance of external team members)

SAU #: 71 School: Goshen/Lempster School District Date: April, 26, 1999

Team Member(s) Conducting Review	Title
Maryclare Heffernan	Educational Consultant, SERESC
Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu	Educational Consultant, SERESC
Debra Grabill	New Hampshire Department of Education
Harvey Harkness	Educational Consultant, SERESC

FINDINGS – CITATIONS OF NON-COMPLIANCE

COMMENDATIONS:

- Student records at the Elementary School program were generally well organized.
- The staff responsible for providing special education programming are open to suggestions and technical assistance regarding special education policies, procedures and program development.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed # 1107.02(b)(d) 1 file lacked documentation of referral to out-of-district program and there was no written notice to parent of disposition.
- Ed # 11707.07 2 files lacked documentation that SEE/PT teams had appropriate composition. In both cases, the LEA representative was not present at the meeting and there was no teacher certified in the suspected area of disability.
- Ed # 1107.08(a) 1 file of L.D. student showed evidence of an incomplete evaluation team. There was no evidence that regular ed. teacher, L.D. certified individual or LEA representative was present at the meeting.
- Ed # 1109.01(a-l) 1 IEP for out-of-district student had recently expired. There was no written documentation indicating a meeting had been scheduled to review this issue. This IEP also lacked a transition component, indication of service providers and reflected a shortened school

day with no documentation for special request to the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Ed # 1109.03	2 files contained evidence of inadequate team composition for IEP meeting. One IEP also reflected that the LEA representative had signed the document 5 days after the meeting had occurred.
Ed # 1109.11	1 file for out-of-district student did not contain evidence of monitoring of IEP goals and objectives for the past year.
Ed # 1111.01	1 file for out-of-district student lacked documentation that Extended School Year Programming has been considered.
Ed # 1115.03	1 file for out-of-district student did not contain evidence that the placement team had appropriate composition. Members of the team signed their names, but did not include their title or role(s) on the team.
Ed # 1115.06	1 file lacked documentation that Least Restrictive Environment had been determined annually.
Ed # 1123.04(a)(7)	Both files reviewed had no sign-in sheet for documenting record of access.
Ed # 1125.03	2 files lacked evidence of written prior notice.
Ed # 1133.03	1 IEP for out-of-district student contained a vocational component, but no evidence that a vocational assessment had been completed.

Suggestions:

- The SAU needs to ensure that minutes of meetings are recorded and kept in student files.
- The individuals filling the role of LEA representative must be in attendance at all required meetings rather than “signing off” documents.
- The visiting team suggests that the SAU consider adopting and using the NH State Special Education Model Forms.
- The SAU needs to devise a plan or strategy for ensuring that evaluation teams include a teacher endorsed or certified in the area of suspected disability in attendance at all required meetings.
- Students placed out-of-district and high school students with IEP’s need to be more closely monitored. The LEA needs to take full responsibility for oversight and development of programs, as well as monitoring progress.